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ABSTRACT

Given the general recognition that what we do is influenced as much or more by our value commitments as by our factual knowledge, it is ironic that social studies, the area of the curriculum supposedly focused on citizenship education, has paid so little attention to values. There are many reasons for this, but one of them, the author believes, is the teachers' lack of a model for making values an integral part of instruction. This paper is both a theoretical and practical effort to answer this need. The author points out that since most important issues facing society are not factual questions but ethical ones, an adequate model for citizenship education must take into account that rational citizenship behavior includes justifying ethical decisions in terms of one's values. Because the school has little role in determining what these values are, its role becomes one of helping the student to develop a clearer conception of what his commitments are, and to relate these commitments to the basic social values and facts, personal preferences and basic social values, values and public issues, and gives attention to the more practical aspects of examining values in the classroom. Throughout, there is emphasis on the need for a clear rationale, and classroom behavior based on that rationale. (JLB)

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ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION

THE TEACHER IN A MULTIVALUE SOCIETY*

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In 1970 there is no need to document the diversity of commitment in the American society. Nor is it necessary to indicate the potential gravity for the community when communication breaks down and diametrically opposed groups begin confronting one another physically. One may view the present unrest, especially among students, as the prelude to catastrophe. Or, we may look upon this as a period of intense confrontation that is to be welcomed and suffered with relief, as well as trepidation, because it provides for the badly needed re-examination and rejuvenation of the society's values. In any event, to the extent that the school has had a role in the dissention, it is questionable that it can claim much credit as a positive stimulator of commitment and dissent. The school's role has probably been largely negative--that is, students are reacting against what has been done to them in the schools, rather than responding positively to the school program and the teachers who personify it.

Perhaps the most appropriate place to begin a consideration of the teacher in a multivalue society is with the recognition that with the exception of areas such as mathematics where specific intellectual skills are taught, the school--through its teachers--has relatively little impact on its students in a positive sense. There are exceptions, of course. We all know of instances

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where individual teachers have had tremendous impacts on students. Generally, however, the little time spent with any one teacher, the relative lack of importance of the teacher to the student as compared to the home and his peers, the lack of reality of the scholastically oriented curriculum, the frequent lack of spontaneity and interpersonal warmth and integrity on the part of teachers--all combine to make school a series of class periods each with little impact on the student except as he reacts in dispair or disgust, as well as with occasional interest.

Teachers commonly express concern about taking a personal stand on public issues in the classroom for fear of exerting undue influence over their students. Given their general lack of status in the student's many relationships, they are likely engaging in wishful thinking--as ego deflating as that may seem. The issue is not, how can the teacher avoid undue influence, but how can he exert some positive influence on student valuing in the context of a multivalue society.

Focus: The Social Studies

Of all the areas of the school curriculum, it is the social studies which is most immediately concerned when questions are raised about the teacher in a multivalue society. It is not that teachers in other areas have nothing to do with values. Much of what goes on in the school is indirectly, and occasionally directly, concerned with the students' conceptions of right and wrong, good and bad, worthwhileness and uselessness. But the multivalue society is usually discussed in a political context, in light of the pluralism of groups competing to control the society's destiny, and social studies educators have taken on the mantel of citizenship education.

Given the general recognition that what we do is influenced as much, or more, by our value commitments as by our factual knowledge, it is more than a little ironic that social studies, the area of the curriculum supposedly focused on citizenship education, has paid so little attention to values. For years a curriculum based on the old definition of the social studies as the social sciences adapted and simplified for pedagogical purposes has depended on textbooks presenting watered down, often inaccurate, versions of the results of historical and social science research. Instruction has been largely in the cognitive domain, often not rising above the levels of comprehension and recall of trivia.

With the advent of the so-called "New Social Studies", more up-to-date versions of the social sciences have become available. These reflect more academically competent views of the major findings and generalizations, and concern with the philosophy and methodology, of social scientists. The social studies teacher--headed in that direction by the academic content orientation of his own public and higher education schooling--is still provided with materials which emphasize the empirical world. Many teachers still wonder "in the backs of their minds" what they should be doing about values. Most often nothing is done directly because the teacher has no model of instruction which explicitly includes notions of what to do about values and valuing. What is done by a few young, politically concerned teachers is often not based on a carefully considered rationale, and frequently violates the assumptions of a culturally diverse society. Those assumptions will be considered shortly.

In large part, the teacher's troubled vagueness about values is no more than a reflection of our teacher education programs. On the one hand, teacher education courses consider general questions of curriculum, educational philosophy, and psychology without applying them directly to social studies instruction; on the other hand, they focus on technique (lesson planning, question asking) rather than rationale. Teacher educators are all too prone to accept without question the long standing parameters of social studies education. Rarely do they push for justification of what is being done. The results are all too plainly evident in our schools.

Recently I worked for a day with a group of teachers in a fairly large city school district evaluating the seventh and eighth grade curriculum that they had developed in a year of work--including summer time paid for by the district. The curriculum was "inquiry oriented" in the finest sense of the new social studies. The historian was used as the model for getting students to formulate and test hypotheses. Unfortunately, the written rationale for the curriculum was a set of objectives, rather than a sketching of the view of reality which underlay and supposedly justified the objectives. This may have had something to do with the fact that little was done with values except to take a historical look at the development of some western political values and to indicate that values are an important part of culture.

On the surface, it was reasonable to conclude that this group of teachers was committed to teaching history and social science. Yet, as we began to explore what they hoped to accomplish in their social studies classes, it became clear that they were concerned about citizenship education, about the need for commitment, about what that commitment should be in a democratic

society, and about how to help students translate their commitments into more rationale decisions about the issues confronting the society. However, their schooling had not taught them (the teachers) to raise questions of rationale vis-a-vis citizenship education in a democratic society, or to relate what ideas they had about political behavior to the selection of content and behavior for their classrooms.

Values and Citizenship

What sort of conceptualization might be helpful to the teacher who is concerned with treating values in the context of citizenship education in a democratic society? A reasonable starting point is the recognition that the most important issues facing the society are not factual questions such as the social scientist and historian deal with, but ethical questions--questions about proper aims and actions for the society and the individuals in it. Factual data and generalizations are important to the resolution of ethical questions: Knowledge about the present status of the matter under consideration, about the events leading to it, and about the likely consequences of different courses of action--including nonaction--is vital. But ethical decisions--in this case political-ethical decisions, because they are debated and decided in the political realm--are based on more than facts. They are justified in terms of one's values--in terms of his standards of right and wrong, good and bad. Agreement on the facts will not always lead to agreement on appropriate action. For example, two people may agree that certain policies would lead to miscengenation and disagree violently over whether the policies should be adopted. An adequate model for citizenship education must,

therefore, take into account that rationale citizenship behavior includes justifying ethical decisions in terms of one's values.

In general, there is agreement that the most publicity defensible basis for a political-ethical decision is to appeal to basic moral values--standards which are based on some notion of man's dignity and are applicable to all men. Included are values such as equality of opportunity and freedom of conscience. To some people, using values to justify decisions simply means that one identifies the basic values of the society and then is certain that the policies supported are consistent with them.

In our pluralistic society, this stance has gotten some teachers into trouble. They have advocated policies that were in line with the "right" values as they saw them, and have had confrontations with parents whose opposing views were in line with other "right" values. In other words, the teachers have failed to note that our basic values are not only vague, leading to differing interpretations by different subgroups in the society, but that they conflict with one another so that practically any policy proposed to deal with a public issue can be supported in the name of at least one basic value and opposed in the name of another basic value.

In this sense, to call our society multivalue seems to make less sense than to call it pluralistic. The conflict arises not because there is a multitude of values to which we are committed, but because different groups with varying backgrounds interpret and apply the values differently.

Personal Preferences

Perhaps the notion of "multivalue" applies more appropriately when we turn to the consideration of personal values--preferences as to how I prefer to spend my leisure time, how I will dress, where my residence will be, what my occupation, if any, will be. Here there is greater diversity in avowed commitment. (However, polls which reveal the number of people who reject the basic ideals expressed in the Bill of Rights are not comforting to one who believes that common commitment to an American Creed is an essential cultural device, providing the context for debate and holding the society together in times of stress.)

The distinction between basic and personal values is not always clear-cut, although it generally makes sense. Surely, both types of values are related to political-ethical controversy. The predilection not to live next door to blacks is an important ingredient in our racial problem, and people's beliefs about such matters cannot be discarded simply by saying that they involve personal preferences. Personal commitments in regard to such matters as divorce, contraception, and abortion have often been the subject of public concern and policy making. This means that questions about personal life styles are relevant in a curriculum concerned with citizenship education. In fact, the very question of the meaning of life has become a central issue in the recent surge of interest in pollution and environment. And as the population continues to grow--as seem destined, despite the many warnings--the meaning of life will continue to be an issue. The question may be not what can we do about our environment, but how can we adjust to it? How can man find meaning in life in an environment different from anything he has experienced in the past?

In short, the social studies teacher cannot legitimately avoid teaching about values if he is truly concerned with citizenship education. And such teaching must include not only the consideration of basic social values, but consideration of those values that have to do with personal life styles. Fortunately, there is no need to get bogged down in the old arguments about whether teachers should indoctrinate or inclucate values. The evidence from research in political socialization indicates that that issue is likely passé. The child's values are primarily formed outside the school, with the basic outlines largely delineated before he even reaches elementary school. That the school has little impact should not be of any great surprise, as already noted above.

The school's role, then, becomes one not of value inculcation, but of helping the student to develop a clearer conception of what his commitments are and to relate those commitments to the basic values of the society and to decisions about the issues confronting the society. There is no pedagogical order implied. The processes may well proceed simultaneously. For example, at an early age, children develop a notion of fair play. This notion, with its different implications, can be related to the societal values of equality of opportunity (it's not fair to select someone to be on the baseball team just because his brother is already on it) and equal protection of the law (referees and umpires are not to apply the rules differently to different teams or individuals). Helping the students to make these extensions and, at the same time, having them probe such questions as the effect which commitments to equality of opportunity and equal protection of the law (fair play) have on behavior are essential elements of value clarification that can be carried out together.

Values and Public Issues

The question with a greater ring of reality than the one about value inculcation is, How should the teacher treat values in the discussion of public issues? In the first place, a distinction should be made between values and policy decisions (ethical judgments). The teacher is the agent of a democratic society. He, therefore, has a right, an obligation, to guide the discussion of public issues within the context of basic social values, and to encourage the examination of personal values as they relate to public issues. Given our commitment to intelligence and to the right of individuals (even students, perhaps?) to exercise their own judgments, the teacher does not have the right to impose particular policy decisions. He has the right to assume that basic values, such as equality of opportunity, should be accepted, but not the right to force specific interpretations of these values on the students.

In the area of personal values, the teacher's role is not so clear. Certainly, he must question whether the relation of certain personal values to public issues is not so vital that the society has a right to consider controlling them. Note, however, that his stance is not to maintain that the values should or should not be changed or controlled, but to raise questions about whether the society might not consider doing so. For example, the teacher should not advocate a position on birth control, but raise the question as to whether the growth in population does not present a serious enough problem that the society should consider measures to control the number of offspring couples may have--either through tax relief, the provision of contraceptives, or more direct intervention such as sterilization. The policy itself (that is, the measure to control behavior based on personal values) should then be considered in terms of basic moral values--such as the right to life, preservation

of the society; or, in the area of racial prejudice--freedom of association, equality of opportunity, property rights.

Can Values Be Avoided?

How can a social studies teacher avoid dealing with values if he truly believes that citizenship education and reflective or critical thinking are central purposes of social studies education? It hardly seems that he can. Values are often not dealt with explicitly because the teacher has not examined his assumptions about citizenship education and their implications for the curriculum. Instead, he has, by default, let others make his curricular decisions for him. He has used available history and social science materials without asking if they are really appropriate to the purposes which he is likely to espouse for social studies education.

Another impediment to teaching about values in a diverse society is the very nature of the society itself. If the society were monolithic so that there was agreement on the values and on the attendant policy decisions, the teacher's mandate would be clear and the only objection from parents would be that he was not teaching the values strongly enough. Obviously, however, in our society the matter is not so simple--even if one teaches in a largely homogeneous community such as the one in which I live in rural Utah. For democracy must be construed in a broader context than the local community. If the commitment to participation in decision making as an aspect of human dignity is to have meaning, alternatives must be posed. The teacher's role is not to support the local view--nor to oppose it--but to open students to the consideration of other alternatives as part of making meaningful choices. Without alternatives there are no decisions to be made.

The Need for a Rationale

Clearly, teaching about values is likely to bring about reactions from parents. They are rightly concerned about what the school does to their children--and the children of other people. For that reason alone, it is vital that the teacher have a clear rationale for what he is doing, and that he be able to convey this to his administrators and to parents. He should have a clear conception of the importance of pluralism--a spectrum of value commitments--to the decision making processes of a democratic society, of the ethical nature of the society's basic decisions, of the role of values in providing justification for ethical decisions, and of the vague and competing nature of values in our society. He must be able to put his attempts to strengthen students' commitments and to help students clarify and apply values in the context of the democratic commitment to human dignity and to the use of intelligence which differentiates man from the lower animals. His position must be more than the euphemism that controversy is good in and of itself.

But he must not only have a clear rationale based on the nature of our society and its values, but he must behave in accordance with that rationale in the classroom. The discussion of issues should take place in the context of the clarification of values and value conflicts, not as an imposition of values by the teacher. A clear model of the role of values in critical thinking--something that is now missing from available social studies textbooks--must guide his teaching.

The Teacher's Opinion

Does the call for critical discussion mean that the teacher should never tell the students what his position is on a public issue? First of all we must ask, Why would he want to do so? Personally, I feel very little compulsion to take a personal stand on issues when I am teaching. However, I have had some teachers tell me that it is their right as citizens to express their views in the classroom, something akin to freedom of speech.

There is no denying that one should not lose any of his rights as a citizen by becoming a teacher. A teacher should be able to participate actively in politics and to state his views as a citizen. In fact, one of the unrealities of the school is the failure of teachers to translate classroom discussion into action in the community. Too often the failure to do this with students is but a reflection of the teacher's own life. He discusses issues in class, but avoids involvement in the affairs of the community--except for joining the Lion's Club. Consequently, the students see him as a hypocrite advising them to become involved in politics, but unwilling to do so himself.

But how do the teacher's rights extend to the classroom? Does he have the right to use the classroom as a platform for his own political beliefs? I would say most assuredly not. He is, as a teacher, an agent of the society/. (not the establishment!) He is not hired for political indoctrination, but for education in the context of the many different subgroups making up the society he serves. In fact, if he is not committed to that society, he has accepted his contract under false pretenses. For example, although the use of violence is a viable question which must be debated in the classroom, the advocacy of violence with its potential threat to the society clearly lies outside the proper role of the

teacher. He should be subject to dismissal for such advocacy just as he should be for using the classroom to advocate any other specific political stance.

Perhaps, if what was said earlier is correct--that is, that the teacher really has little influence on his students--the issue of the teacher's right to state his political views in class is a straw man. It is not a straw man however, in the minds of parents who often overestimate the teacher's power.

We should also note that sometimes the question arises, not because the teacher is concerned about his political rights, but because students ask for his opinion. Again, he must be mindful of the parents' rightful (not righteous, although it may be that, too) indignation if he does state his view. Yet, he is likely to seem less of a person to his pupils if he avoids their inquiries. It has been my experience that if a teacher is concerned with teaching his students to make intelligent political-ethical choices; that if his model of reflection is an adequate one calling not only for the clarification of language and the examination of factual questions, but for the clarification and application of values in a context of value conflict; and if he is sincerely committed to this model, encourages his students to apply it not only to their dialogues with each other, but with him, the question loses much of its impact. If the students have the intellectual competencies and the interpersonal security to challenge the teacher's beliefs, then his view becomes only one among many. He should still not be an advocate; but to express his view as one to be examined among others becomes a legitimate act of pedagogy--one that can be defended to administrators and parents. However, if the teacher has carefully built and communicated a rationale and a proper classroom atmosphere, it is unlikely that he will have to defend his behavior.

In short, the teacher's handling of values can be a ticklish matter in a multivalue society, but it still can be done. A teacher must deal with values if he is to achieve the commonly stated purposes of social studies education. But he must remember that he is an agent of the society, and his teaching must be based on an adequate conception of the commitments of our pluralistic, multivalue society.

The School as an Institution

Finally, let us turn to the context within which the teacher works--the educational institution itself--and its appropriateness to a multivalue society. It is no secret that the school is viewed by many students not only as irrelevant to real life, an empty exercise, but an experience to be suffered. In large part, the students' attitudes are a reaction to the school's lack of tolerance for diversity--an ironic situation in a pluralistic society. The school is, in fact, an institution which demands conformity and imposes rules rather than encourages students to explore alternatives and make decisions. It may well be that the school's neglect, if not rejection, of rationality in dealing with students is in part responsible for the rejection of rational discourse by campus radicals.

Fortunately, the courts are raising the school's oppressive restrictions on hair and dress styles, and have declared in the Tinker Case that students do not lose their rights, such as freedom of speech, by attendance at a public institution. However, not only rules for behavior, but the curriculum itself is forced on the students. Rarely are students engaged in sincere consideration of what their many hours in school should be like.

It is in this sense that the school is a negative, rather than a positive force. Its failure to encourage diversity or reflection are illustrated by the following items from Charles Silberman's "Murder in the Schoolroom: How the Public Schools Kill Dreams and Mutilate Minds" in the June 1970 Atlantic:

> ITEM: A high school senior--eighth in a class of 779, active in a host of extracurricular activities (student marshals, General Organization, Key Club, after-school tutoring program, president of the Debate Society, among others), and described on the school's record as "intelligent, highly motivated and mature," with "excellent leadership and academic potentials"--is barred from the school's chapter of the National Honor Society on the grounds of poor character. At an open meeting of school board candidates the preceding spring, he had politely asked a question which implied some criticism of the high school. In the opinion of eight of the Honor Society's fifteen faculty advisers, none of whom had been present at the meeting in question, none of whom had ever met the boy in question, criticism of the high school is equivalent to disloyalty, and disloyalty constitutes bad character. The seven faculty advisers who do know the youngster fight for his admission but are overruled.
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> ITEM: (from the Montgomery County,Maryland, Student Alliance Report): "In the way of a few examples: one student who insisted that he would protest against the Vietnam War in front of the school was told by a vice-principal that if the student persisted the school official would see to it that he could not get into college. . . . Another high school student, a National Merit Scholarship Finalist, as it happened, was told by his counselor that he would get a bad recommendation for college because he was a 'nihilist.' He had been arguing with her over the values of the county school system."

Such instances are all too common. Silberman may be correct in his assumption that generally teachers are humane and well meaning, despite what appears often on the surface to be a general effort to demean students. Undoubtedly, the institution within which they operate, with its emphasis on distrust and strict orderliness and submission, to a large extent shapes their own fearful and restrictive behavior. Yet, teachers must accept much

responsibility for the atmosphere. For it persists to the extent that they allow themselves to be cowed by administrators who insist that silence and order are the signs of teaching competency. And it persists to the extent that teachers lack coherent rationale based on the commitments of a pluralistic society upon which they can defend an open, inquiring curriculum against individual interests in the community. If teachers' organizations are in fact concerned with the student's welfare as well as with economic gains for the profession--as they usually claim--a fitting step would be to insist upon a loosening of the strictures of the school, a movement on the part of the teachers demanding that students be treated as individuals deserving of respect and involvement.

It is a basic premise of a free society that ideas and interest must be allowed to compete. To be consistent, schooling for such a society must involve the opportunity to confront alternatives, to weigh them rationally, and to carry out decisions. The task of the social studies teacher is to provide the intellectual orientations and skills and the open environment which allow for intelligent, as well as heated and loud, confrontations. In this way, the experiences of the school can merge into the realities of political decision making, rather than standing delineated as a fragment of life which calls for a patient marking of time until one becomes an "adult", a person deserving of commitment and action.